

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Please cancel claims 8 and 18 and amend claims 1 and 11 as indicated below.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of irrigating the eye of a patient during surgery comprising supplying to the eye an aqueous solution consisting essentially of a source of bicarbonate ions, a physiologically acceptable organic buffer which is an organic zwitterionic buffer having a buffering capacity within the range pH 6.8 to 8.0, and optionally a source of phosphate ions and/or a source of electrolytes necessary to maintain physiological function selected from Na⁺, K⁺, Ca²⁺ and Cl⁻, wherein the solution does not contain glucose, or any other energy source which tends to degrade at physiological pH over extended time periods.

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the organic buffer maintains the solution at a pH in the range 7.2 to 7.8.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the organic buffer is a zwitterionic amino acid.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 3, wherein the organic buffer is N-2-(hydroxyethyl) piperazine-N'-(2-ethanesulfonic acid).

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the buffer is from 10 to 50 mmol/l.

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the bicarbonate source is sodium bicarbonate.

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein the bicarbonate source is preferably present in the solution to give a bicarbonate concentration of about 10 to 50 mmol/l.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the solution has been sterilized by an autoclaving procedure.

10. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the ocular irrigating solution claim 1 replaces fluid loss during surgery and maintains corneal function.

11. (Currently Amended) An aqueous ocular irrigating solution for irrigating the eye during surgery consisting essentially of a source of bicarbonate ions, a physiologically acceptable organic buffer which is an organic zwitterionic buffer having a buffering capacity within the range pH 6.8 to 8.0, ~~sources of electrolytes necessary to maintain physiological function~~ and optionally a source of phosphate ions and/or a source of electrolytes necessary to maintain physiological function selected from Na^+ , K^+ , Ca^{2+} and Cl^- , and wherein the bicarbonate source is present in the solution to give a bicarbonate concentration of from 10 to 50 mmol/l, and wherein the ocular irrigating solution does not contain glucose, or any other energy source which tends to degrade at physiological pH over extended time periods.

12. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 wherein the organic buffer maintains the solution at a pH in the range 7.2 to 7.8.

13. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 wherein the organic buffer is a zwitterionic amino acid.

14. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 wherein the organic buffer is N-2- (hydroxyethyl) piperazine-N'- (2- ehtanesulfonic acid).

15. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 wherein the concentration of the buffer is from 10 to 50 mmol/l.

16. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 wherein the bicarbonate source is sodium bicarbonate.

17. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 wherein the bicarbonate source is present in the solution to give a bicarbonate concentration of from 15 to 25 mmol/l.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) An ocular irrigating solution according to claim 11 having been sterilized by an autoclaving procedure.